

Something had happened wrong about a bill
 That was not drawn with true mercantile
 skill;
 So to amend it I was told to go
 And seek the firm of Clutterbuck and Co.;

or again:

We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
 And said to Johnson, 'Johnson, take a chair/

Impossible, you may say—the bathos must be
 absolutely
 deliberate! The reader of Crabbe at large,
 however, and
 of those almost illiterate letters of his old
 age (so hard to
 reconcile with the fine letter to Burke), can
 never feel
 sure, as with Jane Austen we feel sure, that
 he knows
 what he is doing. At times it seems as if
 literary English
 were something of a foreign tongue to him.
 There are
 lapses in his grammar. So there are, for that
 matter, in
 Jane Austen's; but where she paints on her
 'two inches
 of ivory', he works more crudely on a tile
 from the
 domestic hearth. There is, however, still
 another link
 between him and the authoress of
Northanger Abbey, in
 the fun both make of romantic
 extravaganzas and the
 goblin posterity of Horace Walpole and Mrs.
 Radcliffe:

banditti who, in forest wide
 And cavern vast, indignant virgins hide;
 Who, hemm'd with bands of sturdiest rogues
 about,
 Find some strange succour, and come virgins
 out;

(which reads—so little do human appetites
 change-
 strangely like an account of a modern film
 melodrama).

Yet there is also a difference. Crabbe
 mocked romantic-
 ism of this sort, but he had also loved it in
 his time, and
 devoured it. He is a realist, like Jane
 Austen, but the

realist of a wider, as well as lower, world;
and a realist
far less single-minded and content to take
life as it is.
He laughs at dreams; but he envies them.

Go on, then, Son of Vision! Still pursue
Thy airy dreams; the world is dreaming too.